2. What attitude should the British representatives adopt if the French should decline to take the offensive, or alternatively, if they should accept the obligation to undertake it, but show by their attitude that they did not intend to give full effect to their undertaking ?

I summed up the arguments against further offensives on the Western Front this year, which *My summary of the arguments for defensive policy* opposed to the policy of a great offensive, namely, Generals Alexeieff and Petain. The former had given his opinion that Russia could not undertake any large offensive this year, and consequently the Allies in the West would find themselves opposed to the great bulk of the German reserves, and by attacking would exhaust their manpower in an operation offering no prospect of success, thereby weakening their offensive capacity for 1918. General Petain, the French could say, had accurately forecast the failure of General Nivelle's offensive, and believed in repeated surprise attacks designed on a less ambitious scale. The French would ask what prospect there was of a successful offensive on the Western Front this year. They would produce figures to show that the Germans had a superiority in heavy artillery, and that in numbers the Allies had no

considerable superiority ; in short, that the superiority of men and material necessary for a successful offensive was lacking. They would further urge that the blockade was telling on the enemy ; that by 1918 the Russian situation would have cleared up definitely one way or the other, and that the United States of America would